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Alternatives to Litigation Center to Open September 1

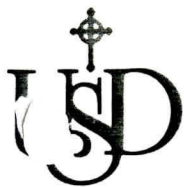
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ALTERNATIVES TO LITIGATION CENTER TO OPEN SEPTEMBER 1

Alternatives to Litigation, San Diego's first full-scale service providing cost-effective methods for resolving commercial and other disputes outside the courts, will begin operations on September 1, it was announced recently by Hon. Louis M. Welsh, director of the program.

A project of the San Diego Law Center, co-sponsored by the University of San Diego School of Law and the San Diego County Bar Association and funded in part by a grant from the Weingart Foundation, the Center will be located in Columbia Centre, 401 West "A" Street, in space donated by Douglas F. Manchester, president of Torrey Enterprises, Inc., owner of the building. Manchester is a member of the University's Board of Trustees.

Welsh, recently retired jurist of the San Diego Superior Court and a much-honored member of the legal profession, has worked with the Law Center since January, laying the groundwork and organizing the Alternatives to Litigation program. According to him, the major services to be offered by the Center will be mediation, either as simple settlement conferences or in "more sophisticated mini-trials"; litigation management, a process enabling counsel to acquire enough information to evaluate cases for early settlement; and adjudication, which involves arbitration and references from the court.

Joining Welsh on the initial panel of retired jurists and senior attorneys who provide these services are: Hon. Richard Ault, Hon. Robert Conyers, Alec L. Cory, Esq., Hon. Stevens Fargo, Hon. James L. Focht, Hon. Charles W. Froehlich, Dewitt A. Higgs, Esq., Hon. Joseph Kilgarif, Marshall Ross, Esq., William J. Schall, Esq., and Louis Tepper, Esq.

Panelists were selected, Welsh said, because they are "distinguished persons well respected in the legal community for their impartiality and judgement. They are the kinds of lawyers and judges we feel confident in, and were selected in consultation with members of the profession throughout the County." Eventually, the panel will include experts in other disciplines, including accounting, finance, architecture, business, engineering, and medicine.

Services of the Center are not restricted to residents of San Diego County, the program director explained. "There are no geographical limitations whatsoever--we will even take cases from citizens of other countries." While the emphasis is on commercial and business litigation, all kinds of disputes involving major claims will be accepted, including real estate, domestic, and personal injury disputes. "Many of our cases," Welsh pointed out, "will come through referrals from the courts, from judges who perceive cases as appropriate for non-litigation mediation. But the largest number, we expect, will come through lawyers who want to do a cost-effective job for their clients." Services are also available to individuals not yet represented by counsel.

The multi-faceted program entails education and research as well as dispute resolution, Welsh says. The ALC will serve the University of San Diego School of Law as an experimental laboratory for research in the relative values of different techniques and as a forum for clinical education, and in the coming months will begin a training program for persons interested in developing mediation skills.

"Although there are similar centers in the United States," commented Welsh, "we know of no others operated by a university, sponsored by a bar association, and working closely with the local courts."

Already applauded by area jurists and attorneys, the USD-Bar Association program will open its doors with several cases in progress. According to Welsh, "this kind of effort results in savings for the clients; increased ability of competent attorneys to take on additional cases and better serve the public; and improved calendar management for the courts. We believe the Center may become a model for similar programs in other communities."

Persons interested in further information about the Center, its services and fees, may contact Judge Welsh beginning September 1 at the Alternatives to Litigation Center, 619/236-1848.

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For further information: Judge Louis M. Welsh, Director
Alternatives to Litigation
University of San Diego School of Law
(before 9-1) 619/291-6480, ext. 4815
(after 9-1) 619/236-1848



THE SAN DIEGO LAW CENTER

ALTERNATIVES TO LITIGATION

Fact Sheet

- THE CENTER:** Alternatives to Litigation has been established by The San Diego Law Center, and co-sponsored by the University of San Diego School of Law and the San Diego County Bar Association, to provide cost effective alternatives to litigation for resolving commercial and civil disputes.
- LOCATION:** Columbia Centre
1401 West A Street
Suite 1400
San Diego, CA 92101
- DESCRIPTION:** Directed by former Superior Court Judge Louis Welsh, the grant-funded program is the only one of its kind in the nation to be endorsed by the court system and supported by both the Bar Association and a university.
- Its services are designed to minimize the costs of resolving commercial and other disputes. Mediation, litigation management and arbitration, conducted by retired judges and attorney specialists, are offered.
- Alternatives to Litigation was founded for a number of reasons:
- Alternate methods of dispute settlement are needed to ease the case load on the overburdened judicial system.
 - The Center will provide less-expensive alternatives to the mounting costs of full-scale litigation. Alternate dispute resolution replaces the lengthy trial process of the traditional legal system, settling conflicts much more rapidly.

- The University of San Diego will use this center as a laboratory, to measure the effectiveness of various alternatives to litigation.

SERVICES:

Mediation

The mediator facilitates communication between the parties and offers non-binding recommendations to resolve the conflict. Mediation may take the form of a simple settlement conference or a more sophisticated mini-trial.

Arbitration

A method of settling a dispute in which the disagreeing parties present their cases to a mutually agreed upon third party for a binding decision. An arbitrator is selected to evaluate the conflict and make a decision that will resolve the dispute.

Litigation Management

The Center will evaluate a case prior to the trial stage to discover the most salient points and attempt to resolve these points to achieve an early settlement.

PANEL:

The panel is composed of a number of prominent attorneys and retired judges who will serve as mediators and arbitrators. If an additional expert in some field is needed, Alternatives to Litigation will assist in locating such an individual.

Honorable Richard Ault
Honorable Robert Conyers
Alec L. Cory, Esquire
Honorable Stevens Fargo
Honorable James L. Focht
Dewitt A. Higgs, Esquire
Honorable Joseph Kilgarif
Marshall Ross, Esquire
William J. Schall, Esquire
Honorable William Sommer
Louis Tepper, Esquire
Honorable Louis M. Welsh (Director)

OPERATION: The director will determine the most appropriate alternative forum, if such a decision is requested by the disputing parties or the counsel. Hearings will be held at the Center's Columbia Centre headquarters. In some instances, hearings will be held at the USD School of Law to provide students with clinical exposure.

COSTS: Mediation and Litigation Management:
\$200 For initial hour
\$150 For each succeeding hour or portion thereof

Arbitration and References:
\$500 Half day
\$800 Full day

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